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Viewing cable 07BOGOTA8478, PRESIDENT URIBE DISAVOWS THIRD TERM, BUT DOUBTS

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Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#07BOGOTA8478**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
07BOGOTA8478	2007-12-11 21:20	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Bogota

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.semana.com/wikileaks/Seccion/168.aspx>

VZCZCXYZ0011
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHBO #8478/01 3452120
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 112120Z DEC 07
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0473
INFO RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY 9656
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ DEC 9115
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA PRIORITY 5704
RUEHZP/AMEMBASSY PANAMA PRIORITY 0963
RUEHQQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO PRIORITY 6398
RUEHGL/AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL PRIORITY 4211
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUCNDTA/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 1880

id: 133834
date: 12/11/2007 21:20
refid: 07BOGOTA8478
origin: Embassy Bogota
classification: CONFIDENTIAL
destination: 07BOGOTA8430
header:
VZCZCXYZ0011

PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHBO #8478/01 3452120
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 112120Z DEC 07
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0473
INFO RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY 9656
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ DEC 9115
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA PRIORITY 5704
RUEHZP/AMEMBASSY PANAMA PRIORITY 0963
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RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUCNDTA/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 1880

----- header ends -----

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 008478

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/07/2017

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [CO](#)

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT URIBE DISAVOWS THIRD TERM, BUT DOUBTS
REMAIN

REF: BOGOTA 8430

Classified By: Political Counselor John Creamer
Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: Public debate continues over whether President Uribe will seek a second re-election in 2010. Uribe has publicly said he will not do so, and presidential political strategist Jose Obdulio Gaviria categorically told us Uribe will not run again. Still, U Party Secretary General Luis Giraldo continues to collect the signatures needed to start the process to amend the constitution to allow for a third Uribe term. Many believe Uribe wants to keep the door open for a third term to delay lame duck status and enhance his leverage in selecting a successor. Amending the Constitution would likely require 12-18 months--meaning a serious reelection effort would have to be underway by mid-2008 to allow Uribe to stand in 2010. End Summary.

¶2. (C) President Uribe publicly said on November 28 that he will not run again, noting that "to try and stay in power would take away from the essence of democracy, and for that reason, the country needs to start thinking about new leaders." Presidential advisor Jose Obdulio Gaviria privately told us December 7 "you can count on it," Uribe will not seek a third term. Gaviria publicly said, "I can't enter the soul of the President, but I would tell those that want to succeed Alvaro Uribe to prepare themselves because there is not going to be a re-election." U Party President Carlos Garcia also said Uribe is not interested in running again and that the U Party is considering other candidates (see reftel).

¶3. (C) Gaviria told us Uribe understands he would pay a high political, institutional, and personal price if he were to run again. First Lady Lina Moreno has made clear she does not want her husband to seek a third term, and other observers note that the political deals required to achieve reelection would jeopardize Uribe's legacy. Weekly magazine Semana noted that a third Uribe term would risk comparisons with Venezuelan President Chavez and raise questions about his commitment to democratic principles. Any re-election proposal would require support from Uribe's coalition political parties in Congress, especially the Conservatives and Cambio Radical. Leaders from both parties say they would

not support such an effort and want to run their own candidates.

¶4. (C) Still, efforts to promote a third Uribe term continue.
U Party Secretary General Luis Giraldo announced prior to the October 28 local elections that he would collect signatures to start the constitutional amendment process to allow for a third term. Despite Uribe's disavowal, Giraldo says he will continue his campaign--which is in the organizational phase. Gaviria told us Giraldo's efforts enhance Uribe's leverage to choose his successor and ensure the continuation of his policies. Garcia told us the "referendum ploy" was a way for the U Party to garner support in the October elections and to create more political space for Uribe during the remainder of his second-term. Gaviria added, however, that the lack of a clear Uribe successor would lead center-right leaders and the business community to press Uribe to stand again. Opinion polls show a slight majority of Colombians would support a third term.

¶5. (U) Amending the constitution is difficult and would require a minimum of 12 to 18 months to complete, according to most experts. A serious amendment effort would have to be underway by mid-2008 for Uribe to run in 2010. It can be done in three ways: 1) Congress can pass a constitutional change through two separate, consecutive rounds of four debates in one Congressional year (session), with subsequent approval of the change by the Constitutional Court; 2) Congress can call a Constituent Assembly; and 3) signatures can be gathered (equal to five percent of the population) calling for a referendum. Congress and the Constitutional Court must then approve the referendum language. Finally, the change must be approved by 50 percent plus one of voters in the referendum--with a minimum of twenty-five percent of the voting population participating. The U Party effort would utilize the third route.

Brownfield

=====CABLE ENDS=====